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## THE REQUIREMENTS OF A POET

### A NOTE ON THE SOURCES OF BEN JONSON'S *TIMBER*, PARAGRAPH 130

The studies of Schelling,<sup>1</sup> Spingarn,<sup>2</sup> Simpson,<sup>3</sup> and Castelain<sup>4</sup> would seem to have left undiscovered no source for any part of Jonson's *Timber* (1641). A field however rich would seem to offer but meager gleanings after such assiduous reaping. Paragraph 130 has already been shown by M. Castelain to be an aggregation of verbal borrowings, echoes, and close translations from Scaliger, Cicero, Seneca, Ovid, Petronius, Quintilian, Horace, Valerius Maximus, Bacon, Persius, Simylus, Daniel Heinsius, Aulus Gellius, and Suetonius. In the same paragraph, however, there is an analysis of the requirements of a poet which is of peculiar interest to the student of the theory of poetry and the theory of rhetoric in the English Renaissance. This analysis, I believe, has not previously been traced to its source or discussed critically.

In the passage mentioned, Jonson requires of the poet the following qualities (the reader is referred to the edition of M. Castelain for the complete text):

*First*, wee require in our *Poet* or maker . . . a goodnes of naturall wit. For, whereas all other Arts consist of Doctrine, and Precepts: the *Poet* must bee able by nature, and instinct, to powre out the Treasure of his minde. . . .

To this perfection of Nature in our *Poet*, wee require Exercise of those parts, and frequent. Things wrote with labour, deserve to be so read, and will last their Age.

The third requisite in our *Poet*, or *Maker*, is *Imitation*, to bee able to convert the substance or Riches of another *Poet*, to his owne use. To make choise of one excellent man above the rest, and so to follow him, till he grow very Hee; or so like him, as the Copie may be mistaken for the Principall.

<sup>1</sup> Ben Jonson, *Discoveries*, ed. by Felix E. Schelling, Boston, 1892.

<sup>2</sup> Joel Elias Spingarn, *A History of Literary Criticism in the Renaissance*, New York, 1899.

<sup>3</sup> Percy Simpson, "Tanquam Explorator, Jonson's Method in the Discoveries," *Mod. Lang. Rev.*, II (1906-7), 201 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Ben Jonson, *Discoveries*, a critical edition by Maurice Castelain, Paris, 1906.

Not, as a Creature, that swallowes, what it takes in, crude, raw, or undigested; but, that feeds with an Appetite, and hath a Stomacke to concoct, deuide, and turne all into nourishment. Not, to imitate servilely, as Horace saith. . . .

But, that which we especially require in him is an exactnesse of Studie, and multiplicity of reading, which maketh a full man. . . . There goes more to his making then so; For to nature, Exercise, Imitation and Study, *Art* must be added, to make all these perfect. And, though these challenge to themselves much, in the making up of our Maker, it is *Art* only can lead him to perfection.

From the marginal notes we can summarize his analysis as follows: (1) *ingenium*; (2) *exercitatio*; (3) *imitatio*; (4) *lectio*; (5) *ars* (*ars coron*).

It is at once evident that there is just such an inconsistency between Jonson's insistence on the inspirational theory of poetry at the beginning and his final dictum that art only can lead the poet to perfection, as one would expect from a commonplace book. The result is that the paragraph as it stands is a critical monstrosity fairly representative of the Renaissance eclecticism which considered every ancient an authority, both by himself and in combination with others of opposing views.

That the poet should be able by nature to pour out the treasure of his mind, that he should be gifted with *ingenium*, genius, the poetic rapture, is Platonism. Indeed Jonson quotes both Plato and Aristotle, from Seneca, not from the source, however, to uphold his point. Plato says of it, speaking through Socrates in the *Phaedrus* (245), that there is a madness which comes to those possessed of the Muses and inspires a poetical frenzy, and in the *Ion* (533 and 534) he says that good poets compose their poems not by art but through inspiration. Aristotle, also, in the *Poetics* (xvii) says that a poet must be gifted by nature or have a strain of madness in him, and in *Rhetoric* (iii. 7) he says that poetry, unlike oratory, is inspired.

Thus far Jonson is preaching the Platonic theory of inspiration in poetry. The rest of the analysis is not poetic, the theory of poetry, but rhetoric. Protagoras is said to have originated the analysis of the requirements of an orator. His analysis is as follows: (1) *φύσις* (*natura*); (2) *τέχνη* (*ars*); (3) *ἄσκησις*, or *μελέτη* (*exercitatio*).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cicero, *De oratore* (ed. by A. S. Wilkins), Introd., p. 57.

Plato recognizes a difference between the poet and the orator, insisting that the poet must be inspired, but following Protagoras for the requirements of the speaker. Oratorical success depends partly on natural ability and partly on art. Natural ability (*φύσις*), knowledge (*ἐπιστήμη*), and practice (*μελέτη*) are equally necessary (*Phaedrus* 269). Aristotle recognizes poetic and rhetoric as distinct arts by devoting a separate treatise to each. The poet, he thinks, should be inspired, but he makes no such requirement for the orator, furnishing, indeed, no example of such an analysis as is found in Jonson's *Timber*.

The most characteristic early Latin rhetoric is that addressed by its anonymous author to Caius Herennius (81 B.C.). The Middle Ages believed it to be written by Cicero. It presents a quite different analysis, omitting all mention of *ingenium*, but making imitation co-ordinate with the others.

Haec omnia [successful public speech] tribus rebus adsequi poterimus, arte, imitatione, exercitatione. Ars est praeceptio, quae dat certam viam rationemque dicendi. Imitatio est, qua impellimur cum diligenti ratione ut aliquorum similes in dicendo velimus esse. Exercitatio est assiduus usus consuetudoque dicendi.<sup>1</sup>

In a later section the author admits the need of natural parts and suggests the mutual interdependence of nature and training, "ut ingenio doctrina, praeceptione natura nitescat" (*Ad Her.* iii. 16. 29). The definition of *ars*, as precept, a body of theory, rules, gives the classical conception of the word as it is used by Jonson. The idea also that *exercitatio* is assiduous use, practice, falls in with the conception expressed by Jonson. This is a more limited definition, however, than that given by Cicero and Quintilian.

Cicero in his *Brutus* (vi. 25) says that eloquence may proceed from (1) *ars*, (2) *exercitatio*, and (3) *natura*, but does not there appraise their relative importance. In his *Pro Archia poeta* (i. 1), also he refers to the same qualities as (1) *ingenium*, (2) *exercitatio*, and (3) *ratio* and *disciplina*, giving his old teacher the credit for his progress in

<sup>1</sup> Cicero, *Opera rhetorica*, recognovit Gulielmus Friedrich. Vol. I, continens libros ad C. Herennium, et de inventionem (Lipsiae, 1893), i. 2. 3.

each branch. It is in his *De oratore*, however, that Cicero gives his fullest development of the classification.

1. *Natura et ingenium* (*De orat.* i. 25. 113–15).—Natural talent gives the greatest power to public speech. Mentally it gives the orator acumen, fertility, and a good memory. Physically it equips him with a ready tongue, a good voice, vigor, and a pleasing appearance. This natural talent cannot be given by art, but it may be sharpened. With but slight talent a man may become an ordinarily good speaker but not a perfect orator. Some, however, are hopeless.

2. *Ars* (*De orat.* i. 32. 146).—By *ars* Cicero, like all classical writers on rhetoric, means the rules and precepts of the rhetoricians. The rules are the result of observing the practice of great speakers and consequently are of less importance than *natura*. “*Sic esse non eloquentiam ex artificio sed artificium, ex eloquentia natum.*” Nevertheless the rules are a useful element in the education of an orator and should not be neglected. In a later book (*De orat.* ii. 87. 356) he repeats that art educates but cannot create an orator. For instance, the mnemonic system of Simonides is useful in strengthening the memory which a man may already have.

3. *Exercitatio* (*De orat.* i. 33–34).—Unlike the author of *Ad Herennium* and Jonson, who use the word in the sense of constant practice, Cicero means by *exercitatio* the pedagogical devices by means of which the student learns to speak effectively. The following, he says, are useful: speaking, writing, paraphrase, translation, imitation, reading of poetry and history, study of law and politics. In Jonson’s analysis imitation and reading are elevated from their subordinate position to become main heads. Like Jonson, Cicero insists that the orator must be a learned man. In a later book (*De orat.* ii. 22. 90–92) Antonius recommends that the young student pick out a good model of imitation and imitate the good qualities, avoiding mannerisms. This approaches closer to Jonson’s “one man” but does not go so far. In the *De inventione* (ii. 1), Cicero says that he adopts the best from previous writers on rhetoric, just as Zeuxis painted his Helen of Crotona from the five most beautiful virgins. Erasmus, in his *Ciceronianus* (1528), uses the same story as an argument against the imitation of one man. In Jonson’s analysis there is evidently little or no direct indebtedness to Cicero.

Quintilian, the rhetorician *par excellence*, naturally gives the fullest development of this rhetorical classification in his *De institutione oratoria* (ca. 68–88 A.D.), “*Facultas orandi consummatur natura, arte, exercitatione*” (iii. 5. 1). This is the threefold division of Protagoras, Plato, and Cicero. Of the relative importance of nature and nurture, natural talent and theoretical training, Quintilian says, “*Consummatus orator nisi ex utroque fieri potest*” (ii. 19. 1). If an orator had to be deprived of one of these elements, he could best dispense with training. Again, a man moderately equipped with both will owe more to nature but “*consummatos . . . plus doctrinae debere quam naturae putabo*” (ii. 19. 2). He supports this very high opinion of training by an analogy with agriculture, for a good farmer will cause good soil to produce more than if it were uncultivated. Like Cicero, Quintilian considers *natura* as being largely physical. Thus he says that *ars* will not help a man if he is not equipped by *natura*, not only with a good memory, but with a pleasing utterance and appearance as well (xi. 3. 11–13).<sup>1</sup> It seems quite appropriate that both Cicero and Quintilian, while agreeing that art and nature are both necessary, should show a special bias in allotting the preponderance. Cicero, the orator, would rather like to consider himself a genius; while Quintilian, professor of rhetoric, would tend to appreciate the full value of instruction in his subject.

But to Quintilian precepts, though necessary, are not sufficient to make an orator if unsupported by exercise. Of this there are three equally necessary processes: *scribere, legere, and dicere* (x. 1. 1). In the next paragraph but one he says, *dicere, imitatio, scribendi*. This illustrates one of the salient reasons for reading—the study of expression. The student should read all literature not only for subject-matter (*propter historias modo*) but also for words, manner of expression (i. 4. 4; also x. 1. 5 ff.). But imitation, says Quintilian, is of two sorts: *in audiendo* (x. 1. 8, and 5. 17–20) and *in legendo* (x. 1–2), the latter being the more important. The interrelations

<sup>1</sup> Good organs of speech and tone of voice, strength of body, and grace of motion are of such power that they frequently gain for their possessor the reputation for *ingenium* (xii. 5. 5). Here *ingenium* seems to mean mental qualities and *natura*, physical. This differentiation is uncommon.

of *lectio* and *imitatio* according to Quintilian are best illustrated by the following diagram:

$$\begin{array}{c} \textit{lectio} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \textit{propter historias modo} \\ \textit{propter verba—in legendo} \\ \textit{in audiendo} \end{array} \right\} \textit{imitatio} \end{array}$$

Imitation, to Quintilian, seems very useful, but with only imitation the student can never surpass his models. He should imitate not one man but the excellencies of all men. He should imitate not words only but all elements of expression.

Tacitus, in his *Dialogus* (ca. 84–85 A.D. or 94–95 A.D.), lays his emphasis in a new place. While Cicero had glorified natural ability and Quintilian had exalted the technical elements, Tacitus, admitting the force of both, lays greatest stress on a combination of talent and practice. Maternus is made to say, “Neque enim tantum arte et scientia, sed longe magis facultate et usu eloquentiam contineri” (*Dialogus* xxxiii). In addition he agrees with Cicero that the orator must be a truly educated man (*Dialogus* xxx). His attitude toward imitation is not stated directly, but he recommends in section xxxiii that the student accompany his master to the forum, and there not only see how he pleads his cause but observe the opponent and the effect on the auditors. This is Quintilian’s imitation *in audiendo*. From this we may conclude that one model for imitation would be distasteful to Tacitus. Here we have no apparent direct influence on Jonson.

Thus the classical treatises on rhetoric, with the exception of *Ad Herennium*, all follow the classification of Protagoras, insisting that the finished orator must have native ability, knowledge of rhetorical theory, and familiarity through practice. But the treatises on the theory of poetry in classical times did not cleave to Plato’s theory of poetic inspiration. They set up in its stead a rhetorical ideal which resulted in the learned content and sophisticated style of the later Greek and Latin poets. The poets were burdened by technique. Their *ingenium* had to be disciplined and governed by *ars*.<sup>1</sup> For example, Horace in his *Ad Pisonem* (ca. 13–8 B.C.) writes in the spirit

<sup>1</sup> E. Norden, *Die antike Kunstprosa* (1898), pp. 182 ff.

of the rhetoricians when he says that *natura* and *ars* are equally needful in poetry:

Natura fieret laudabile carmen an arte  
quaesitum est: ego nec studium sine divite vena,  
nec rude quid prosit video ingenium [ll. 408-12].

Jonson knew his Horace and quoted from him freely, but he could not have obtained suggestions from him for his analysis, for Horace has no such complete division. Like the *Ad Pisonem* of Horace, the anonymous treatise *De sublimitate*, at one time ascribed to Longinus, is under rhetorical influence, but it comes much nearer to being a genuine discussion of poetic. The author names five essentials to lofty style: the power of forming lofty conceptions (*ροήσεις ἀδρεπήβολον*), inspired passion (*ἐνθουσιαστικὸν πάθος*), figures, phraseology, and composition. The first two are derived from natural genius, the last three from art (viii. 1). The insistence on the emotional basis of poetry, on its quality of inspiration, brings the author closer to Plato, Aristotle, and the true conception of poetic than are any of his fellow-critics of a rhetorical age. But the treatise is far from consistently Platonic. The author believes that, although nature is the basis of lofty conceptions and inspired passion, it frequently needs the curb of art. Nature is good fortune; art, good counsel (i). "Success of never failing is in most cases due to art, the success of high, although not uniform, excellence, to genius; that, therefore, art should ever be brought in to aid nature; where they are reciprocal the result should be perfection."<sup>1</sup> This doctrine is certainly not that of Platonism. Just as certainly it derives from the classical rhetorics.

In the Renaissance the logical distinctions of the classical critics very naturally became blurred. The distinction between rhetoric and poetic became almost lost, rhetoric being mainly interested in stylistic artifice, and poetic becoming rhetorical in its dependence on rules and its tendency to persuade. For example, the threefold analysis of oratorical requirements on the one hand suffered sea-change in its treatment by the Renaissance rhetoricians, and on the other was carried over in whole or in part into the treatises on poetic by the literary critics.

<sup>1</sup> Longinus (pseudo), *On the Sublime* (trans. by A. O. Prickard, Oxford, 1906), XXXVI, 4.



Among the rhetoricians Stephen Hawes in his allegorical didactic *Pastime of Pleasure* (1506) illustrates the tendency to garble classical theory. He conducts Grande Amour to the abode of *Rethoryke*, where the student is instructed as follows:

To understandyng these iii. accident:  
Doctryne, perceyveraunce, and exercyse,  
And also thereto is equypolent  
Evermore the perfyte practyse.

Farther on in the poem, he is given additional information:

Than shal he knowe, by perfyte study,  
The memorial arte of rhetoryke defuse  
With exercyse he shal it well augment.<sup>1</sup>

Apparently Hawes does not concern himself as to whether natural talent, which he does not mention, or formal rules of art are more important. His analysis is confusing, but at least we may gather that he placed great faith in "doctryne" (*ars*) and "exercyse," or "practyse" (*exercitatio*, or *usus*). In his *Ciceronianus* (1528), Erasmus asserts that the fountain of eloquence is study, art, practice, meditation, sincerity, and native talent.

Pectus opulenter instructum . . . . pectus artis praeceptionibus, tum multo scribendi dicendique usu, diutina meditatione praeparatum: &, quod est totius negotii caput, pectus amans ea quae praedicat, odio prosequens ea quae vituperat. His omnibus conjunctum oportet esse naturae iudicium, prudentiam, & consilium, quae praeceptis contineri non possunt.<sup>2</sup>

He evidently includes imitation, although he deprecates its overuse, as may be seen in a later passage in the same work. The new element of sincerity introduced by Erasmus does not seem to have been popular among later writers. Sir Thomas Elyot does not pretend to teach rhetoric, but he thinks with Cicero that the true orator must be a learned man and a philosopher and deprecates the overemphasis on tropes and figures, which occupy so much space in the later works on rhetoric.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted from the edition of 1555, for the Percy Society, London, 1845, pp. 45, 51.

<sup>2</sup> Erasmus, *Dialogus, cui titulus ciceronianus, sive, de optimo dicendi genere*, in *Opera omnia* (Lugduni Batavorum, 1703), I, 1002 A.

<sup>3</sup> *The Boke named The Governour* (edited from the first ed. of 1531 by H. H. S. Croft, 2 vols., London, 1845), I, 116.

Louis Vives, recommended by Wilson in his translation of Demosthenes as "a Spaniarde, and one notably learned," like Elyot, is closer to the classical doctrine. In his *De ratione dicendi* (1537) he asserts that *ars* can accomplish little without *natura* and *exercitatio*.<sup>1</sup> Thomas Wilson's *Arte of Rhetorique* (1553)<sup>2</sup> is the earliest<sup>3</sup> and best example of classical rhetoric in England. Wilson's sources were Cicero's *De inventione* and *De oratore*, Quintilian, and the *Ad Herennium*, which he quotes believing it to be Cicero's.<sup>4</sup> At the very beginning of his treatise<sup>5</sup> he informs his reader "By what meanes Eloquence is Attained":

First needfull it is that hee, which desireth to excell in this gift of Oratorie, and longeth to prove an eloquent man, must naturally have a wit, and an aptnesse thereunto: then must he to his Booke, and learne to bee well stored with knowledge, that he may be able to minister matter for al causes necessarie. The which when he hath got plentifully, he must use much exercise, both in writing, and also in speaking. For though hee have a wit and learning together, yet shall they both little availe without much practise. . . . Many men know the art very well, and be in all points thoroughly grounded and acquainted with the precepts, & yet it is not their hap to prove eloquent. And the reason is, that eloquence it selfe, came not up first by the art, but the arte rather was gathered upon eloquence.<sup>6</sup> . . .

Now, before we use either to write, or speake eloquently, wee must dedicate our myndes wholly, to followe the most wise and learned men, and seeke to fashion as wel their speache and gesturing, as their witte or endyting.

. . . .

To this purpose and for this use, is the arte compiled together, by the learned and wisemen, that those which are ignorant might iudge of the learned, and labour . . . to followe their woorkes accordingly. Againe, the arte helpeth well to dispose and order matters of our owne invention, the which wee may followe as well in speaking as in writing, for though many by nature without art, have proved worthy men, yet is arte a surer guide

<sup>1</sup> *Opera omnia* (8 vols. in 7. Valentiae Edetanorum, 1782-90), II, 156.

<sup>2</sup> Edited by G. H. Mair, Oxford, 1909, from the ed. of 1560.

<sup>3</sup> Leonard Cox's *The Arte or Crafte of Rhethoryke* (edited from the ed. of 1530 by F. I. Carpenter, Chicago, 1899) discusses only *inventio* and is based on Melanchthon. He does not mention *ars*, *natura*, and *exercitatio*.

<sup>4</sup> I shall present my evidence for this statement in a forthcoming detailed study of the sources of Wilson's *Arte of Rhetorique*.

<sup>5</sup> Pages 4, 5. In quotations from the English of the period the use of *v* and *u* has been modernized, and the long *s* has been abandoned.

<sup>6</sup> A direct translation of Cicero *De oratore* i. 32, quoted above.

then nature. . . . Again, those that have good wittes by Nature, shall better encrease them by arte, and the blunt also shall bee whetted through arte, that want Nature to helpe them forward.

This gives an analysis of five co-ordinate topics: (1) "wit and aptnesse" (*ingenium* or *natura*); (2) "He must to his Booke" (*lectio*); (3) "practice" (*exercitatio*); (4) "Follow the wise men" (*imitatio*); (5) "arte" (*ars*). Wilson seems to have read both Cicero and Quintilian previous to writing this section, but he depends more on Quintilian for his recommendation that the student should imitate the wise men, and that art is a surer guide than nature. Renaissance eclecticism again seems responsible for his juxtaposition of the latter statement with Cicero's insistence that nature is of greater importance because eloquence was not born of art, but art of eloquence. Not recognizing the logical soundness of the classical division into *natura*, *ars*, and *exercitatio*, Wilson elevates *imitatio* and *lectio*, parts of *exercitatio*, to become co-ordinate with the first three. Apparently the first to depart from the classical precedent in thus making a five-fold division, he gives an example for Jonson to follow in his fivefold division. Furthermore, in Wilson as well as in Jonson, *exercitatio* is taken to mean practice or exercise instead of exercises, or *progymnasmata*.

The dearth of good teachers of rhetoric in the Middle Ages and in the early Renaissance, combined with the later rediscovery of the classic authors, led to an increasing dependence on *imitatio* as an aid to the acquisition of rhetorical skill, especially in the command of style. Petrarch jotted notes of approval in the margin of his Quintilian x. 1. 112; x. 2. 27, where imitation, especially of Cicero, is enjoined.<sup>1</sup> But Petrarch always wrote like himself; Barzizza, Longolius, and Bembo, on the other hand, made a creed of the slavish imitation of the style of Cicero. They reasoned that one could learn to write only by imitation, that one author only could be imitated with profit, that the one should be the best, that the best was Cicero.<sup>2</sup> Erasmus wrote his *Ciceronianus* (1528) to combat this heresy. But he does not carry his hostility to the abuse so far as to condemn imitation outright. He thinks it a good exercise for young students,

<sup>1</sup> P. de Nolhac, *Pétrarque et l'humanisme* (new ed., Paris, 1907), II, 92.

<sup>2</sup> Th. Zielinski, *Cicero im Wandel der Jahrhunderte* (3d ed., Leipzig, 1912), pp. 179-86.

if it is not confined to one model. Cicero himself should be imitated, but only when the student has already studied the rules of rhetoric.<sup>1</sup> Erasmus, in other words, corrected a pedagogical exaggeration and showed that imitation was only one means to gain oratorical effectiveness. But the heresy survived and flourished. Sadoleto, in his *De pueris recte instituendis* (ca. 1532), referred the whole rhetorical education of the boy, both for theory and for imitation, to Cicero,<sup>2</sup> and Ben Jonson would have the inspired poet learn to write verses as the schoolboy learned to write Latin—by imitating one man. Roger Ascham, however, was the most important English Ciceronian. In a letter to John Sturm, in December, 1568, he gives a good example of his theory:

Namque, ut in vitae et morum sic in doctrinae et studiorum ratione omni, longe plus possunt exempla quam praecepta. In illarum vero rerum sive arte, sive facultate, quae sola imitatione perfici videntur, praecepta aut nullum aut perexiguum habent locum, quum exempla isthic vel solitaria plane regnant.<sup>3</sup>

*Imitatio*, not *ars*, is to Ascham the royal road to eloquence. In the same letter he asserts as well that the object of imitation should be Cicero, but the manner of imitation should be, not that of Longolius, ridiculed by Erasmus in his *Ciceronianus*, but that of Sturm. According to Sturm imitation should not be limited to words and phrases but should be “a vehement and artistic application of mind.”<sup>4</sup> This comes from Quintilian. In the section on imitation in the *Schoolmaster* (1570), Ascham develops his theory at greater length. He defends himself against objectors by asserting that Cicero imitated Aristotle for the material of the *De oratore*, and Plato for his dialogue form. Neither of these statements is, of course, true. As to whether one or many should be followed he says, “All, for him that desires to know all.” “But in everie separate kinde of learnyng, and studie by it selfe ye must follow closelie a few, and chieffie some one.”<sup>5</sup>

Not until the seventeenth century did any rhetorical scholar correct these Renaissance vagaries. Combining good judgment with

<sup>1</sup> *Opera omnia*, I, 1024 D.

<sup>2</sup> Translation by E. T. Campagnac and K. Forbes (Oxford, 1916), p. 98.

<sup>3</sup> G. G. Smith, *Elizabethan Critical Essays* (Oxford, 1904), I, 347.

<sup>4</sup> Spingarn, *Literary Criticism in the Renaissance* (New York, 1899), p. 131.

<sup>5</sup> Smith, *op. cit.*, I, 22.

sound classical scholarship, the Dutchman Gerardus Joh. Vossius revived the more logical analysis in his *De rhetoricae natura et constitutione, liber* (1621).<sup>1</sup> His analysis is as follows: "Rhetorice quoque tribus comparatur: Natura, quae incipit; arte, quae dirigit; & usu, qui perficit" (VIII). And lest we make the mistake that every Renaissance rhetorician had previously made, of making imitation co-ordinate, he adds: "Porro tribus illis, quae ad artem requiri diximus, nonnulli adjiciunt imitationem: eosque inter magister Herennianus. Verum ea usus, sive exercitationes, pars est: nisi quis arti subicere malit" (VIII). Vossius also agrees with Cicero and Quintilian in his evaluation of nature, art, and exercise:

Quamquam ad comparandam eloquentiam nihil absque natura ars possit; multum autem absque arte valeat natura: tamen ne iis quidem, qui a natura caeteris sunt feliciores, nedum ingeniis mediocribus, negligendam esse artis culturam: cum orator consummatus, nisi ex utroque, produci non possit (IX).

Vossius was at one time in England, and his work may have come to Jonson's eye, but it is evident that Jonson did not profit by it.

The literary critics, as distinct from the rhetoricians, were of two kinds: the simon-pure Platonists, who postulated inspiration as the fount of poetic creation; and the neo-classicists, who constructed their theory of poetry by the square and rule of rhetoric. The inspirational theory is best illustrated by quotations from E. K., Spenser, and Drayton. In the "Argument to the October Eclogue" of the *Shepheards Calender* (1579), E.K. writes as follows:

Poetrie . . . being indede so worthy and commendable an arte; or rather no arte, but a divine gift and heavenly instinct not to bee gotten by laboure and learning, but adorned with both; and poured into the witte by a certain *Ἐνθουσιασμός* and celestial inspiration.

And in the poem Pierce speaks:

O pierlesse Poesye! where is then thy place?  
If nor in Princes pallace thou doe sitt,  
(And yet is Princes pallace the most fitt,)  
Ne brest of baser birth doth thee embrace,  
Then make thee winges of thine aspyring wit,  
And, whence thou camst, flye backe to heaven apace.

Lodge in his *Defence* (1579) as a Platonist recognized the difference between poetic and rhetoric in his version of the proverb

<sup>1</sup> Hagae, *Comites apud Adrianum Vlacq*, 1648.

"*Poeta nascitur, Orator fit*: as who should say, Poetrye commeth from above, from a heavenly seate of a glorious God, unto an excellent creature man; an Orator is but made by exercise." He tells how Ennius is said to have become a poet by sleeping on Parnassus and dreaming that he received the soul of Homer into him.<sup>1</sup> Jonson may well have read Lodge for this story, as well as Persius *Prologus* i, which appears to be the source. But Jonson does not believe in becoming a poet by this method. It is too easy. Drayton in his *Epistle to Henry Reynolds* (1627) shows himself in complete agreement as to the inspiration of poetry:

Next Marlow, bathed in the *Thespian* springs,  
Had in him those brave translunary things  
That the first poets had, his raptures were  
All ayre and fire, which made his verses cleere;  
For that fine madnes still he did retaine,  
Which rightly should possesse a Poets braine [ll. 105-10].

The classicists in literary criticism take the very opposite view. Vida's *Art of Poetry* (1520-27) has the genuine rhetorical flavor. He admits that not all have the same ability:

Verum non eadem tamen omnibus esse memento  
ingenia [I, 354-55].

But he immediately asserts that cultivation and teaching may overcome even natural disability. Nature is controlled by art:

Saepe tamen cultusque frequens, et cura docentum  
imperat ingeniis, naturaue flectitur arte [I, 362-63].

This is about as far from the Platonic doctrine of poetical inspiration as a critic may get.

Another classicist is the Bohemian Jesuit, Jacob Pontanus, whose *Poeticarum institutionum* (1594),<sup>2</sup> according to a prefatory note, is based on Aristotle, Plutarch, Horace, Scaliger, Viperanus, Minturno, Robortelli, Vida, Cicero, and Quintilian. He says in his preface that no one would try to write orations without studying the art of rhetoric, yet people try to write poetry with neither ability nor preparation. He begins his treatise by an exposition of the inspirational theory of poetry but shows more sympathy with the

<sup>1</sup> Smith, *op. cit.*, I, 71.

<sup>2</sup> Libri tres (Ingolstadii, ex typographia Davidis Sartorii, 1594).

familiar rhetorical point of view. "Ars tanquam certissima dux viam demonstrat: quam si fideliter sequemur, nunquam offendemus" (I, 1). *Natura*, he believes, is the first and most important element, but, to reach perfection, to it must be added *ars*, *labor*, *exercitatio*, and *imitatio*. Imitation is of great importance. The poet should imitate one man. "Unum praecipue tibi deligito, cui te similem esse studeas" (I, 10).

Although Jonson's fivefold analysis evidently does not derive from Pontanus, yet there is evidence that Jonson compiled paragraph 130 with the *Poeticarum institutionum* open on his desk. M. Castelain has shown that Jonson quotes Aristotle and Plato not from the original but from Seneca. Similarly Jonson quoted several other classical authors not from the sources but from Book I of Pontanus. At the beginning of the paragraph Jonson writes: "And these three voices differ, as the thing done, the doing, and the doer; the thing fain'd, the faining, and the fainer; so the *Poeme*, the *Poesy*, and the *Poet*." M. Castelain quotes a similar differentiation from Scaliger, but the following version from Pontanus shows a closer affinity to Jonson: "ut poema, poesis, poeta haec tria differant . . . quasi dicas factum, factio, factor: aut, fictum, fictio, fictor" (I, 7). Again, "For, whereas all other Arts consist of Doctrine, and Precepts: the *Poet* must bee able by nature, and instinct to powre out the treasure of his mind," is from Cicero *Pro Archia*, quoted by Pontanus as follows: "caeterarum rerum studia, & doctrina & praeceptis constare: poetam natura ipsa valere, & mentis viribus excitari" (I, 1). Here as elsewhere Jonson is not attempting a close translation but is adapting as best serves his turn. Next the story that Virgil licked his verses into shape as a bear is said to lick her cubs, traced by M. Castelain to Donatus, as well as the ascription to Scaliger as to Virgil's method of writing, is in Pontanus, I, 16. As to methods of imitation Jonson says, "Not to imitate servilely, as Horace saith, and catch at vices for virtue." Pontanus quotes Horace to that effect, "Notatuit Horatius. . . . Quod autem vitia tanquam virtutes imitantur" (I, 10). Jonson further says that a poet should cull the excellencies of other poets, digest them, and make them his own as a bee gathers sweets from flowers and makes honey. This idea, which M. Castelain has shown to be originally

from Seneca, is also furnished by Pontanus in the same chapter. Finally, Jonson writes, "For, as Simylus saith in Stobaeus," and quotes two lines of the Greek<sup>1</sup> with the following paraphrase: "Without Art, Nature can nere bee perfect; &, without Nature, Art can clayme no being." Pontanus gives the same Greek text—"Simyli apud Strobaeum"—and the following translation closer than the Greek to Jonson's English:

Sine arte nusquam omnino natura est satis,  
Nec ars adempta natura quidquam potest [I, 1].

Other resemblances between Pontanus and Jonson include the doctrine of both that the poet should imitate one man, and the method of both in starting with the Platonic theory of inspiration and then shifting to the rhetorical position of the classicists.

Like Spenser and the Platonists, Sir Philip Sidney has a high opinion of poetic gifts, but primarily he is a classicist: he derives from the Italian critics, who derive from the classical rhetorics. In his *Apologie* (ca. 1583, imp. 1595) he says:

A Poet no industrie can make, if his owne *Genius* bee not carried unto it: and therefore is it an old Proverbe, *Orator fit, Poeta nascitur*. Yet confesse I alwayes that as the firtilest ground must bee manured, so must the highest flying wit have a *Dedalus* to guide him. That *Dedalus*, they say, both in this and in other, hath three wings to beare it selfe up into the ayre of due commendation: that is, Arte, Imitation, and Exercise. But these, neyther artificiall rules nor imitative patternes, we must cumber our selves withall, Exercise indeede wee doe, but that very forebackwardly: for where we should exercise to know, wee exercise as having knowne: and so is our braine delivered of much matter which never was begotten by knowledge.<sup>2</sup>

This is the familiar rhetorical analysis with new modifications: (1) genius (*ingenium*); (2) arte (*ars*); (3) imitation (*imitatio*); (4) exercise (*exercitatio*). Imitation as in the *Ad Herennium* and in the creed of the Ciceronians is co-ordinate instead of a part of exercise. The proportional metaphor of Student is to Training as Field is to Farmer is an echo of Quintilian the rhetorician. Exercise, recommended as a preparation for writing, is of course inherent in rhetoric from its inception.

Between Sidney and Jonson there are no English writers on the art of poetry who give anything like a complete analysis. Most of

<sup>1</sup> *Greek Anthology*, LX, 4.

<sup>2</sup> Smith, I, 195.



them have a high opinion of natural ability. In his *Short Treatise* (1584), James VI, of Scotland, says, "For gif Nature be nocht the cheif worker in this airt, Reulis whilbe bot a band to Nature . . . : quhair as, gif Nature be cheif, and bent to it, reulis will be ane help and staff to Nature."<sup>1</sup> His "Sonnet Decifring the Perfyte Poete" requires "ane rype ingyne, reasons, wordis, memorie, skilfulnes and figuris, quhilks proceed from Rhetorique." This needs no comment to bring out the rhetorical bent. Nash, both in his own writing and in his *Anatomie of Absurditie* (1589), shows his belief in even the vagaries of natural talent. He makes a perfunctory bow to rhetoric, which he holds "in highest reputation." He then adds, "Endevour to adde unto arte Experience: experience is more profitable voide of arte then arte which hath not experience."<sup>2</sup> Puttenham likewise thinks little of art and much of natural talent. If the poet use art, by which Puttenham means artificialities, he should conceal it. His attitude is well exemplified from the third book of his *Arte of English Poesie* (1589): "And yet I am not ignorant that there be artes and methods both to speake and to perswade . . . by which the natural is in some sorte relieved . . . I say relieved in his imperfection, but not made more perfit then the natural."<sup>3</sup> It is interesting to find the dear enemies, Nash and Harvey, in substantial agreement on one topic at least. Although Harvey thinks more highly of discipline than does Nash, they both rate experience higher than theory: Harvey writes in the fourth of the *Fouer Letters* (1592):

To excell, ther is no way but one: to marry studius Arte to diligent Exercise: but where they must be unmarried, or divorced, geve me rather Exercise without Arte then Arte without Exercise. . . . A world without a Sunne; a Boddy without a Soule; Nature without Arte; Arte without Exercise—sorry creatures.<sup>4</sup>

The evidence speaks for itself. Poetic and rhetoric, the two arts of literary communication, were recognized by Plato and Aristotle to be two—the useful art of rhetoric demanding of its practitioner natural aptitude, mastery of theory, and exercise; the fine art of poetry demanding something higher. The Latin literary critics, true to the spirit of their race, minimized the inspirational and

<sup>1</sup> Smith, *op. cit.*, I, 210.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 190.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 334–35.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 236.

amplified the rhetorical elements in their practice and theory of poetry. The Middle Ages, cut off from contact with classical antiquity, was mentally chained by grammar, logic, and rhetoric, the *artes* of the trivium. Hawes is an illustration. Then, when the critics of the Renaissance were first quickened into intellectual life, it was by their heritage not from Greece but from Rome. Thus the battle between the *autores* and the *artes* which ensued was a struggle after all between two rhetorical points of view. The *autores* furnished models to be imitated; the *artes* formulated frigid rules to be followed. This struggle is exemplified by the disputes which culminated in *Ciceronianus*. The next two stimuli came from Greece. Aristotle's *Poetics* was set up as a body of rules by the Italian critics, who, rigid in their rhetorical shackles, ignored his sane admission that a poet must be gifted by nature or have a strain of madness in him. The result was the classicism of Vida, Sidney, Pontanus, and Jonson. The second stimulus was Platonism, insisting that the poet must be inspired from heaven and that nothing else really matters. This romantic idea was seized upon by Spenser, E. K., and Drayton. The effect of these influences has been shown. Saturated as Jonson was with Latin culture, with which his mind was so closely sympathetic, his theories of poetry were naturally those of the Italian classicists. But classicist though he was, like Pontanus he conjoins the Platonic doctrine of inspiration to the rhetorical analysis of the orator and calls the incongruous result the "Requirements of the Poet."

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